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Nobody's Fooled, Mr. Madden

Indiana Representative Ray Madden delivered himself of one of the sillier ideas of the week when, in a House speech, he proposed federal censorship of broadcasters and newsmen who interview leaders in Communist countries.

He wants a "clearing authority," like the State Department or the Central Intelligence Agency, to approve in advance the questions to be asked. He says that recent TV interviews with Red leaders consisted only of "skimmed milk, watered-down questions."

That's his opinion and he's entitled to it. But does he really think the State Department can dream up better news questions than a trained newsmen or that the Communists would be more likely to answer them?

Does he think that questions cleared in advance are more likely to elicit information than the rapid fire probing of any experienced reporter?

Mr. Madden has had enough experience with newspaper reporters to know better. And he knows, too, that neither the State Department nor the Central Intelligence Agency has been noted for its ability to obtain information about the Communists.

Actually the questions asked were a probing of Communist official views on the Hungarian atrocity, on Red subversion in free countries, on the world aims of Communism, on peace and war.

What the Lake County Democrat must have had on his mind were the answers, which were perfect examples of Red dodging and twisting.

The telecast interviews, like those which had been presented previously in American newspapers, were examples of enterprising and responsible journalism.

Because of these interviews, and the freedom with which the American press and broadcasting services conduct them, our citizens can be made more aware of the dangers which Communists and Communism pose to our way of life.

The Khrushchev boast that the grandchildren of present-day Americans will be living under Socialism is the kind of warning that our people should take to heart. To hear and see these characters should make us appreciate our liberty the more.

For the government to barge in with "instructions" on how people — Reds or not — should be questioned by free American journalism would be pushing our country right in the direction of the Khrushchev prediction.

Mr. Madden's speech was interrupted by a Democratic colleague, Representative Michael A. Feighan of Ohio, who said he felt the Hoozier's resolution should be amended so that questions would have to be cleared by Madden himself.

The laughter which arose indicated the House reaction to the ludicrous proposal. That probably will be the end of it, and should be.